1. **BACKGROUND**

Lake County, Florida is an emerging destination with strong natural assets, including 1,000 pristine lakes and rivers, rolling hills and stunning vistas comprise Lake County’s unique terrain, leading up to the highest point in peninsular Florida, Sugarloaf Mountain. Acres of preserves, state parks and a national forest full of flora and fauna attract hikers and avid bird watchers to these undisturbed lands. Lake County boasts 14 distinct municipalities, each with its own small-town personality and unique historic downtown district. Dotted with art galleries, antique stores, mom and pop shops and restaurants to please every palate, from home-cooked comfort food at Lake County’s popular diners to fine dining at intimate lakeside retreats, Lake County’s downtown districts are a refreshing reminder of the way life should be.

The Office of Visit Lake ([Discover Lake County, Florida – Florida’s Lakeside Escape; Lake County, Florida - Real Florida. Real Close. (visitlakefl.com)](https://www.visitlakefl.com/)) operates within the Lake County Board of County Commissioners (LCBCC). Destination marketing and promotion projects are funded by the four percent (4%) Tourist Development Tax (TDT) collected by in county hotel stays and rental stays under six months. Smith Travel Research (STR) counts 2,592 overnight accommodation units with no additional information on hotel development. There are 3,206 short term rental properties in Lake County.

February 2021, County initiated tax collections on short-term rentals resulting in a significant increase of collections. For Fiscal Year 21-22 (October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022), County collected over $5.3 million in TDT collections, a record year.

**SCOPE OF SERVICES**

Consultant shall create a five-year Destination Strategic Plan 2024-2028 (Plan) with the cooperation of the Office of Visit Lake, (Visit Lake) and local tourism industry partners. Plan will inform and guide Visit Lake as it grows its current tourism base in Florida and at the local level. Plan will provide guidance to the Tourist Development Council and Board of County Commissioners on priorities for the use of the Tourism Development Tax.

1. **CONTRACTOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Consultant shall:

* 1. Be normally engaged in performing the type of work specified and implied by this Exhibit A – Scope of Services.
  2. Have a minimum of five (5) years’ experience with satisfactory evidence of responsibility and satisfactory ability to perform the required services (as determined at County’s sole discretion).
  3. Be experienced working with tourism destination clients and shall be able to demonstrate measurable success in projects on behalf of tourism destinations.
  4. Have the personnel and resources to deliver the required services in a professional and successful manner.
  5. Review, evaluate, and provide guidance for the Lake County Tourist Development Capital Projects Funding Program.
  6. Review, evaluate, and provide guidance for the Lake County Tourist Development Event Sponsorship Program.
  7. Provide the following services including, but not limited to:
     1. Consulting, research, report writing services related to Plan development,
     2. Interviews with key stakeholders and influencers;
     3. Interviews with County leaders, staff members and major industry stakeholders;
     4. Evaluate County tourism assets and inventory of assets;
     5. Lead strategic discussions with various community groups;
     6. Research various destinations against which our area should compare and benchmark itself; and
     7. Prepare a final Plan presentation and present to LCBCC and stakeholders.

1. **DELIVERY REQUIREMENTS AND ACCEPTANCE**

KEY OBJECTIVES FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN

* 1. Assesses the effectiveness of Visit Lake’s marketing programs and provide improvement recommendations.
  2. Examines Visit Lake’s impact in marketplace compared to its direct competitors.
  3. Identifies and assess gaps in the tourism, sports, nature, and cultural infrastructure to include identification of potential new or enhanced tourism demand generators and strategies to enhance attractions, events, or assets to drive demand.
  4. Ensures funding and program development are aligned among Visit Lake, its partners, government entities, non-profits and Plan meets the long-term goals of the community.
  5. Recommends actions to increase visitor flow across all segments (leisure, sports, ecotourism, agritourism, meetings, etc.).

DELIVERABLES FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN

* 1. Develop mission and vision statement for Visit Lake.
  2. Identify overarching goals to be measured in short-and long-term key strategies.
     1. Provide tactics for Visit Lake to implement the strategies with measurable desired outcomes.
     2. Provide summary on Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) and other take-aways.
  3. Provide a comprehensive inventory of major existing and planned tourism amenities and products in Lake County to be leveraged for the tourism industry.
  4. Identification, evaluation, and prioritization of any key products or infrastructure deficiencies in the area.
     1. Evaluation to provide recommendations for the best use of current infrastructure and identifying what additional/new infrastructure is needed.
        1. This information to be used to:
           1. Prioritize the types of products Lake County needs,
           2. Ones requiring additional investment, and
           3. Uses of the Tourism Development Tax.
  5. Provide market context for County to leverage non-tourism activity to encourage more visits.
  6. Final presentation PowerPoint and Plan. Final plan should be approximately 20-30 pages.

DELIVERABLES FOR EVALUATION OF THE LAKE COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CAPITAL PROJECTS FUNDING PROGRAM

* 1. The Tourist Development Capital Projects Funding Program was created to fund capital projects within communities in Lake County to expand tourism related activity.
     1. Review and evaluation of current program.
     2. Develop new scoring rubric.
     3. Develop simplified application process.

DELIVERABLES FOR EVALUATION OF THE LAKE COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT EVENT SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

* 1. The Tourist Development Event Sponsorship Program was created to fund special events that attract visitors to Lake County. These funds will be used to facilitate the establishment of new or to expand existing events.
     1. Review and assess current program.
     2. Provide guidance on development and/or changes of program.

TIMELINE AND ONGOING COMMITTMENT

* 1. Plan and the evaluations and recommendations to both Programs approved by LCBCC before the end of the fiscal year (September 30, 2023).
  2. Upon Plan completion, it is possible Consultant will continue services on a quarterly, annual, or biannual basis, as decided by Visit Lake and LCBCC, for follow-up services.

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